

Application No. 09/919,831
Reply to Office Action of January 14, 2004

IN THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in this application:

Claims 1-33 (Cancelled).

34. (Previously Presented) An isolated polynucleotide comprising a nucleotide sequence which codes for a protein which comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2; or a polynucleotide sequence which is fully complementary to said isolated polynucleotide.

35. (Currently Amended) The isolated polynucleotide of Claim 34, ~~wherein~~ which is capable of replication in coryneform bacteria.

36. (Previously Presented) The isolated polynucleotide of Claim 34, wherein the polynucleotide is RNA.

37. (Previously Presented) The isolated polynucleotide of Claim 34, which comprises a nucleotide sequence which codes for a protein which comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

38. (Previously Presented) The isolated polynucleotide of Claim 34, which comprises the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.

39. (Previously Presented) A vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 34.

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40. (Cancelled)

41. (Previously Presented) A vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim
37.

42. (Cancelled)

43. (Previously Presented) A vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim
38.

44. (Cancelled)

Claims 45-48 (Cancelled).

49. (Previously Presented) A process for the preparation of L-amino acids, comprising
culturing a bacterial cell in a medium suitable for producing L-amino acids, wherein said
bacterial cell comprises an attenuated metZ gene, wherein the metZ gene prior to attenuation
comprises the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 34; and recovering the L-amino acid.

50. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 49, wherein the L-amino acid is L-
methionine.

51. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 49, wherein the bacterial cell is a
coryneform bacteria.

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52. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 51, wherein the coryneform bacteria is *Corynebacterium glutamicum*.

53. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 49, wherein recovering the L-amino acid comprises

- (a) removing water from the medium;
- (b) removing from 0 to 100 weight % of the biomass formed during the culturing; and
- (c) drying the medium from (a) and (b).

54. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 53, wherein the L-amino acid is L-methionine.

55. (Previously Presented) A process for preparing an L-amino acid containing animal feed, comprising preparing the L-amino acid according to the process of Claim 49; and mixing the recovered L-amino acid with an animal feed.

56. (Previously Presented) A process for preparing an L-methionine containing animal feed, comprising preparing the L-amino acid according to the process of Claim 50; and mixing the recovered L-methionine with an animal feed.

57. (Previously Presented) A process for preparing an L-amino acid containing animal feed, comprising preparing the L-amino acid according to the process of Claim 53; and mixing the recovered L-amino acid with an animal feed.

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58. (Previously Presented) A process for preparing an L-methionine containing animal feed, comprising preparing the L-amino acid according to the process of Claim 54; and mixing the recovered L-methionine with an animal feed.

59. (New) An *Escherichia coli* cell comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 34.

60. (New) An *Escherichia coli* cell comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 37.

61. (New) An *Escherichia coli* cell comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 38.

62. (New) A coryneform bacterial cell comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 34.

63. (New) A coryneform bacterial cell comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 37.

64. (New) A coryneform bacterial cell comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 38.